

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

AID-05 OPR-02 SCCT-01 A-01 SY-05 /089 W

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R 040810Z NOV 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3669

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0920

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: ERITREA WRAP-UP

1. LULL IN MILITARY ACTIVITY IN ERITREA CONTINUES INTO ITS SEVENTH WEEK, ONLY BRIEFLY INTERRUPTED BY SKIRMISHES IN SAHIL DISTRICT AND KEREN AREA. IN SAHIL, INSURGENTS HAVE APPARENTLY DRIVEN SEVERAL EPMG OUTPOSTS INTO TOWNS OF NAKFA AND KARORA AND HOLD SWAY IN RURAL AREAS OF DISTRICT. EPMG REINFORCEMENTS HAVE BEEN SENT INTO DISTRICT BY BOTH LAND AND SEA, (VIA MERSA TEKLE). IN AN AREA AROUND TOWN OF KEREN THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INCIDENTS AND SOME RETALIATION BURNING OF SOME CROPS, AND OTHER EXCEPTIONS ARE THREE INCIDENTS OF FRONT ASSASSINATIONS AND EPMG REPRISALS IN ASMARA. LULL IS NOW WIDELY BELIEVED TO BE PRIMARILY RESULT OF INSURGENT DESIRE TO AVOID EPMG DESTRUCTION OF FOOD CROPS.

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BY LATE OCTOBER, HARVEST HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN IN THREE HIGHLAND

DISTRICTS OF SERAE, HAMASIEN, AND KELE GUZIA, AND HARVEST IN AREAS OF WESTERN AGORDAT AND KEREN DISTRICT AND SOUTHERN SAHIL WILL BE IN BY MID-DECEMBER. MANY LOCAL SOURCES BELIEVE THAT INSURGENT ACTIVITY MAY INCREASE AFTER THAT TIME.

2. IN THE CITY OF ASMARA ARRESTS CONTINUE WITHOUT DISCERNIBLE PATTERN. IT IS BELIEVED THAT MANY ARE RESULT OF DENUNCIATIONS BY INFORMANTS, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY SOME DETAINEES HAVE ACTIVELY BEEN INVOLVED IN FRONT ACTIVITIES. WIDESPREAD ARRESTS AND RANDOM RETALIATION KILLINGS WHICH FOLLOW FRONT-INITIATED ASSASSINATIONS HAVE BEGUN TO AFFECT WILLINGNESS OF SOURCES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON LOCAL SITUATION. FURTHER, FRONT MEMBERS HAVE STOPPED DISSEMINATING ANY INFORMATION ON THEIR INTENTIONS TO ASMARA POPULACE, LARGELY FOR FEAR OF EPMG INTELLIGENCE NETWORK. IT IS REPORTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT OCT. 26 INCIDENT, AS RESULT OF WHICH 20 PEOPLE DIED, WAS CARRIED OUT BY INSURGENTS FROM ORGANIZATION OUTSIDE ASMARA WHICH DID NOT COORDINATE ACTION WITH FELLOW INSURGENTS IN CITY. THIS LED TO SPATE OF RUMORS THAT INCIDENT WAS TRUMPED UP BY EPMG IN ORDER TO GIVE EXCUSE FOR RETALIATION AND INTIMIDATION. ALTHOUGH PLF MONTHLY TRACT, "SPARK", AND ELF TRACT, "VICTORY", ARE STILL PUBLISHED AND AVAILABLE IN ASMARA, THEY CONTAIN ONLY GENERAL INFORMATION ON CONCEPTS OF FRONT POLITICAL OBJECTIVES RATHER THAN INTENTIONS OF INSURGENTS.

3. ON ECONOMIC SIDE, THERE APPEARS TO BE EPMG INCLINATION TO EASE RESTRICTIONS, APPARENTLY AS RESULT OF CONTINUING LULL. OFFICIAL OF MUNICIPALITY OF ASMARA CLAIMS 100 PER CENT OF CITY'S RESIDENTS HAVE RECEIVED RATION BOOKLETS, ALTHOUGH HE ADMITS THAT RATIONED ITEMS STILL IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY. HE CLAIMS THAT LARGE AMOUNTS OF WHEAT WILL SOON BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH RATIONING SYSTEM. THIS INFORMATION SEEMS TO COINCIDE WITH REPORT THAT DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF SUPPLIES WILL RESUME NOV. 6, TO INCLUDE WHEAT, CORN, AND MAIZE, WITH EACH RECIPIENT GIVEN UP TO NINE KILOS OF GRAIN. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT SIGN OF EPMG MODERATION IS REPORT FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT EPMG AUTHORITIES PLAN TO OPEN ALL ROADS IN ERITREA ON NOV. 4. ALTHOUGH MOST COMMANDERS OF ALL MILITARY BRANCHES OF EPMG FORCES FAVOR THIS MOVE, MANY IN ETHIOPIAN ARMY ARE OPPOSED, CLAIMING SUCH ACTION WOULD FORFEIT ALL ADVANTAGE GAINED TO DATE. CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTIVIST ARMY ENLISTED MEN FORM PRINCIPAL CORE OF OPPONENTS TO ROAD REOPENING, THOUGH THEIR OFFICERS ACCEPT MOVE WITHOUT DISSENT. THE CONFLICT IS DEVELOPING IN REPORTED ABSENCE OF BG WORKU, CO 2 ND DIV., WHO IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN IN ADDIS FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS. IT IS REPORTED THAT BRIEF EXCHANGE OF FIRE SUN. MORNING, NOV. 2, AT 1020 HRS, WAS RESULT OF HOSTILITY BETWEEN CONTENDING EPMG ELEMENTS ON QUESTION OF REOPENING OF ROADS. ONLY APPARENT RESULT OF EXCHANGE WAS HAPLESS ASMARA

TAXI DRIVER WHO WAS KILLED IN INCIDENT.
SHERRY

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